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municipal government from being solved, and so notoriously bad is the administration of New York at present, that the thought of properly governing a city nearly twice as large is nothing short of appalling.

Nor is there any assurance that the already overburdened taxpayers of the cities adjacent to Manhattan Island would find any relief in being swallowed up by their big neighbor; while it is almost certain that the residents of the rural communities which it is proposed to absorb would find their burdens on this score sensibly increased, without any corresponding advantages. And, furthermore, there is the danger that the annexed municipalities and districts might not receive wholly fair treatment in the matter of expenditures and improvements if they should intrust their fate to the tender mercies of New York, which would necessarily control the purse-strings of the future city.

After all, the main question is whether Brooklyn, Long Island City, Staten Island, etc., desire to be added to New York. Without doubt New York would not refuse to take them in should they come knocking at its doors. To compare a thing not small with one greater, the situation is very much the same as that of Canada in its relation to the United States. Our people are generally agreed that they will make no effort to capture what Mr. Wiman is never weary of calling the "greater half of the continent"; and they are likewise generally agreed that as soon as a movement toward annexation comes from Canada, the United States stands ready to do its part towards enlarging its borders on the north.

So it is, or, at any rate, ought to be, with New York and its neighbors. The movement toward consolidation should proceed not from it, but from them. Thus far they have shown almost no desire in that direction. A popular vote on the subject in Brooklyn, for example, would in all probability disclose a very large majority in favor of retaining that city on the map of the Empire State. The failure of the bill in the Legislature a few months ago provoked no lamentations. Consolidation is, in fact, the *fad* of a few men who are fond of publicity and of posing as benefactors of their generation.

EMERSON PALMER.

HARNESSING THE RAIN-CLOUD.

It is wonderful in how many different directions, all at once, scientific realities are superseding ignorant superstitions. We laugh at the predictions of the alarmist who fixes the date of the world's destruction by a tortured interpretation of some Scriptural cryptogram, but the facts of solar physics have a bearing upon the subject which is no laughing matter. The Indian believes that his big medicine-man can open and shut the flood-gates of the heavens at his pleasure, and some of his white brethren still hold a similar belief—a belief that Tyndall has so irreverently ridiculed in his famous challenge.

But though science can admit neither big medicine nor prayer among her "motors," though neither has any demonstrable physical connection with the atmosphere or the clouds, the same cannot be said of the agencies with which General Dyrenforth is experimenting under the patronage of the government. He proposes to bring down the rain, not by charms or incantations, but by perfectly natural means—the simultaneous or serial explosion

of immense volumes of oxygen and hydrogen, mixed in due chemical proportion, and sent up in balloons to greater or less elevations, according to the hygrometric condition of the aerial strata. Thus far the attempt has been, not actually to produce a rainfall, but simply to test the elevating and exploding apparatus used, and more especially to reduce its expensiveness within the practicable limit. When this shall have been satisfactorily accomplished, the next step will be to try the experiment on a sufficiently large scale to produce the desired effect—*i. e.*, at times and places when and where it would be reasonably certain that there would otherwise be no rainfall, such as, for example, the arid districts of Kansas and the Texas Panhandle, or possibly parts of the western coast of South America, where such a phenomenon as a fall of rain is scarcely known.

No atmospheric air in its natural condition is without a certain amount of watery vapor held in suspension. It is, of course, only necessary to bring a sufficiently great pressure to bear upon it to force precipitation of its moisture in the form of dew, mist, hail, snow, or rain. Even the scorched air of the great African desert has its "dew-point," and if it could be suddenly reduced to this temperature, there would be—what probably has never been seen since the continent took on its present form—a terrific thunderstorm in the desert of Sahara!

The abundant rains which almost invariably follow earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, great battles, great conflagrations, and the widespread convulsions of Independence Day long ago suggested the possibility of human control over the elements. Not until the course of experiments now in progress, however, have any really energetic or promising attempts been made in this direction.

A popular belief is that on the occasions which have been named, battles, volcanic eruptions, etc., it is merely the tremendous concussions which cause the precipitation of rain; that the moisture is held in a sort of equipoise, from which it is thrown as a shower of walnuts is brought down by shaking the tree! In fact, however, the effective cause is the sudden condensation of the air from a reduction in its temperature. The heat generated by the explosions of gunpowder, oxyhydrogen gas, etc., great as it is, is utterly insignificant in comparison with the cold produced by the sudden expansion of their gases. The principle may be easily illustrated by sprinkling the floor of a hall on a hot day with boiling water. Notwithstanding the heat of the water, the room is speedily cooled by its evaporation.

WALTER J. GRACE.

ARE WE ANGLO-SAXONS?

IN PROPORTION as the North American republic grows powerful and overshadowing, grows the anxiety of Englishmen to have it understood that this potent factor in the world's affairs is what they term Anglo-Saxon; that it is Anglo-Saxon in race, feeling, and literature. Matthew Arnold, Goldwin Smith, Edward A. Freeman, and James Anthony Froude, all British Chauvinists, are the most distinguished advocates of the idea—an idea received with enthusiasm by some here in America, with indifference by others, but by a large section of our people with dislike, because it is false and because it is offensive. Those great writers are Englishmen who see more or less clearly into the future. They see that the day is surely coming when England will have to take her place behind the American republic, and they would